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GLASSWARE,  
VENETIAN

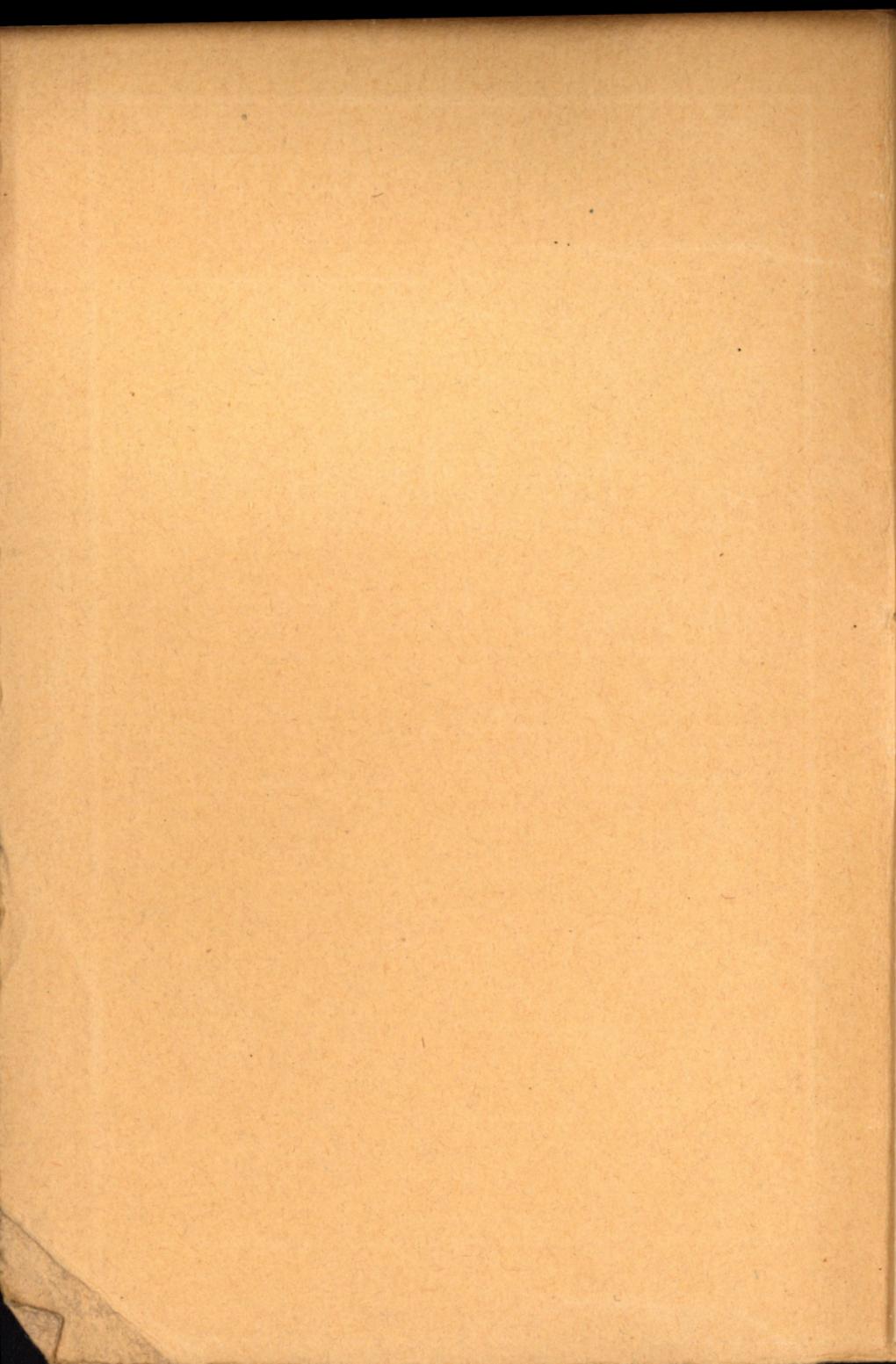
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SALVIATI  
VENICE

:: The Glass and  
mosaic industries  
of Venice :: ::





SALVIATI  
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:: The Glass and  

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mosaic industries  

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Dr. A. SALVIATI

# The glass industry of Venice

As is well known, Venice was founded about 420 A. D. by fugitives from Padua, Gradium, Aquileia & other cities on the mainland, who, pursued by Attila & his Huns, came to these lagoons to save their lives. According to Carlo Martin and Count Filiasi, almost immediately after their settlement, the Glass Industry was started. Thus Venetian glass-making goes back to the first half of the 5th. century. But although that art has left a number of documents, we cannot say that there is an abundance of real historical material, except the « mariegole » or special regulations. A few accounts gathered here and there, of very ancient date, cannot be looked upon as historical. The pieces of art preserved in Italian and in foreign museums are better documents for history, because they are eloquent witnesses of the perfection attained by the glass industry in Murano.

It would be useless therefore to give particulars of those scattered documents which are extremely rare, because the most careful study would not yield any positive results. It is better, for that reason, to begin immediately with the 13th century, when we can affirm with certitude that the glass industry was flourishing and had its own statutes and regulations (mariegole). In fact, beginning with that time (end of the 12th century) the decrees of the Republic of Venice show the importance of the numerous glass works then in existence

and the interest which the government took in that industry, which was so great, that Carlo Marin, speaking of the glass industry could say « Venice loved it like the apple of her eye ».

Venice at that time was the only place where glass was manufactured and thus foreign countries were obliged to come there for it. Thanks to numerous orders and to a continuous and considerable export trade, the treasury was filled with gold. The wealth which that very flourishing industry brought to the population, and the appreciable resources which it supplied to the State induced the Great Council to take the strongest measures to keep in Venice the monopoly of the trade. The Council understood the great importance of that art and the great source of riches it was for Venice and did not hesitate to promulgate laws and decrees growing in severity every day, so as to make Venice the centre of the glass industry, to avoid competition and to impose her products on the whole world.

In fact, shortly after the glassmaking had begun on a big scale, the Great Council inflicted confiscation upon those who carried away from the city rough material, or manufacturing processes or glass in pieces. Soon after this first step to ensure monopoly the Great Council — which was not absolutely certain that the glassmakers who were spread over the different quarters of the city would observe the respect they had sworn to the laws — ordered them to leave Venice and settle in the small island of Murano, under the pretence that the furnaces, the number of which had considerably grown, were a danger of fire.

It is easy to understand, that the real purpose of that order was to facilitate the control of the police charged to watch over the monopoly which the

Republic was anxious to preserve. To better understand the importance which the Republic attached to that industry, it is interesting to quote some of the most remarkable laws which were promulgated either for the protection of the art or for the improvement of its conditions.

1275. Law forbidding the export of glass in pieces, of alum, of sand, of ashes of sea-weed, of chenopods and of quartz necessary for the making of soda and silica.

1282. An exemption of duties is granted to the Germans up to the value of 10 Venetian pounds (« qui portant vitra ad dorsum »).

1282. Law imposing a fine of 10 ducats on glassmakers who, having worked abroad, wished to return to their country.

1283. Decree authorising the use of elmwood only for the heating of the furnaces.

1286. Decree reducing the work of the furnaces to seven months per annum. The furnaces were to be stopped during the hot season from June to November.

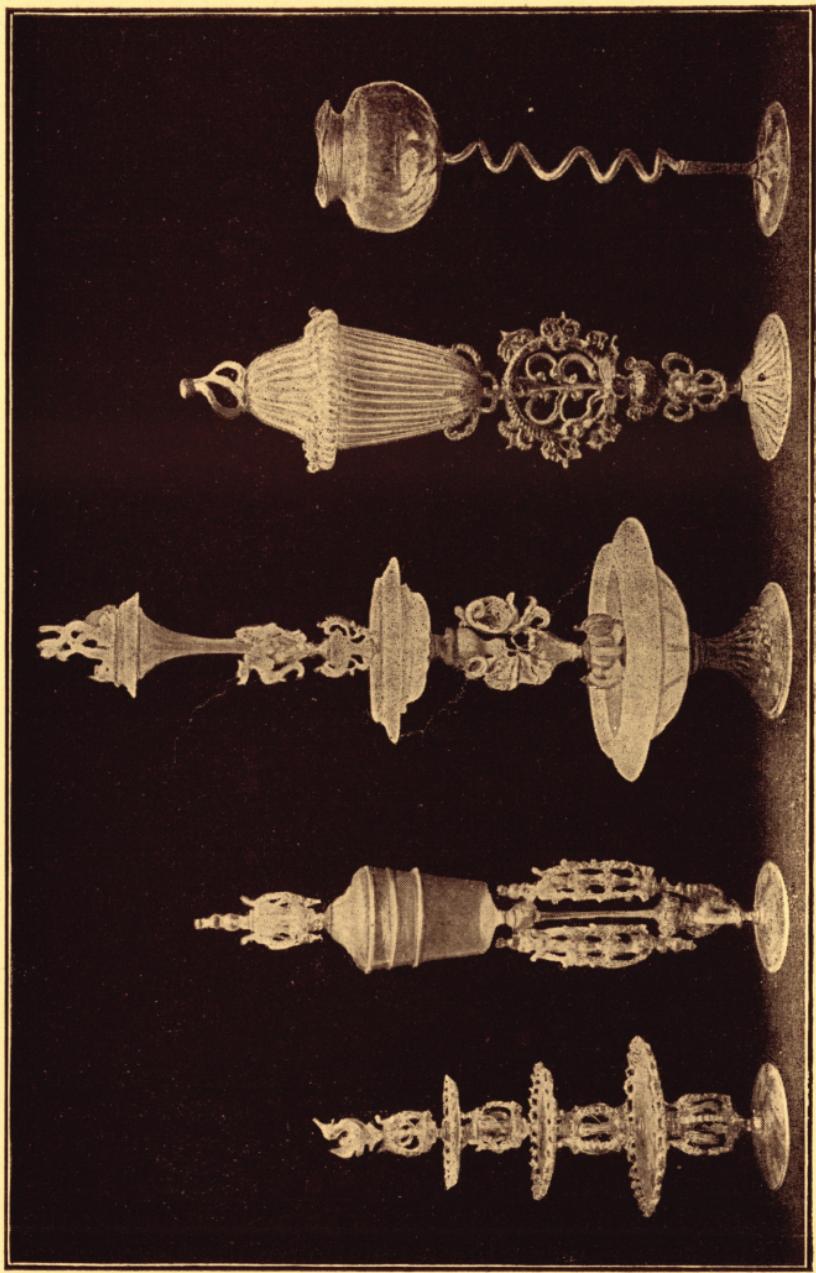
1291. Law forbidding furnaces to exist in Venice and ordering their transference to Murano.

1292. Decree authorising in Venice the establishment of small furnaces at a distance of five steps at least from all inhabited places.

1295. Decree forbidding the export of all rough material used in glassmaking without a special permit.

1295. Law banishing for ever from the territory of the Republic those who left it to work abroad.

The period extending from the 13th to the 14th century is the golden age of glassmaking in Murano. The art came to its highest pitch during the Renaissance, when the reputation of the glassmakers



was grounded not only on the exquisite elegance of the forms, but also on the beauty and the perfect quality of the glass paste and on the paint of cast enamel which decorated the pieces manufactured there. This delicate work of decoration was entrusted to special artists: school for glass painting existed then under the management of eminent masters.

Our glassmakers were highly esteemed by the Popes and kings who protected and helped them, and who especially insisted that the government of the Republic should grant to the best artists permission to work for a certain time at their Courts.

In 1376 the Republic was requested to send to Padua Tomassino of Venice to work there at the windows of the Basilica of Sant Antonio « ex vitro diversis coloribus » and the same artist was sent to work at the Duomo of Milan.

The man who is the symbol of the most glorious traditions of Venetian glassmaking is Angelo Berroviero, who was the most celebrated and the most talented of all Murano glassmakers and was a welcome guest of the Popes Eugen IV and Nicholas V, of king Alfonso of Naples and at the Court of Francis Sforza, duke of Milano, where he was received with the marks of the greatest consideration. It seems that he had been called also by the Court of France to give proofs of his talent. To Angelo Berroviero is attributed the famous « cup Berrovier » which can be seen now in the Museum Civico in Venice.

In 1515 the duke of Vendôme came in great pomp to Murano especially to visit the furnace of Berroviero, brother of the celebrated Angelo.

But this art could attain such a high rank only in a happy period such as was the Renaissance and consequently it disappeared with its decay.

Meanwhile, with the 18th century the art of blown glass was discovered and held its ground, although it had nothing of classic art. The principal qualities of works of that sort were neither the lightness nor the happy form of the past: the bad style of that time in altering the form had of course brought dulness.

Our glassmaking industry was being ruined by the competition of Bohemian glass which the government were powerless to prevent by means of taxes; moreover, numerous furnaces had been established in Treviso, Padua, Vicenza, Mantua, Ferrara, Ravenna, Ancona and Bologna in spite of the extreme severity of the laws of the Republic.

In 1725 the number of the manufactures had fallen from 24 to 4.

The Senate, sharply struck by the decay of that industry, one of the greatest resources of Venetian trade, forbade by a decree the import of all foreign glass and cancelled the export taxes on all produce of the glass industry; moreover, the Council of Five was instituted on April 26th 1729 which had to take all the measures necessary for the conservation of the national industry.

It was during this period particularly that the government of Venice stained itself with horrible crimes, all of which had the same purpose: to save the art of glassmaking, the legitimate pride of the Republic. Unscrupulous men were hired for a few hundred ducats to stab or to poison the best glass artists of other cities.

It is interesting to read the paragraph 26 of statute of State Inquisition to see how the severity of the government degenerated into crime:

“ If a glassmaker transfers his art abroad to the prejudice of the Republic, he will be ordered to return.”

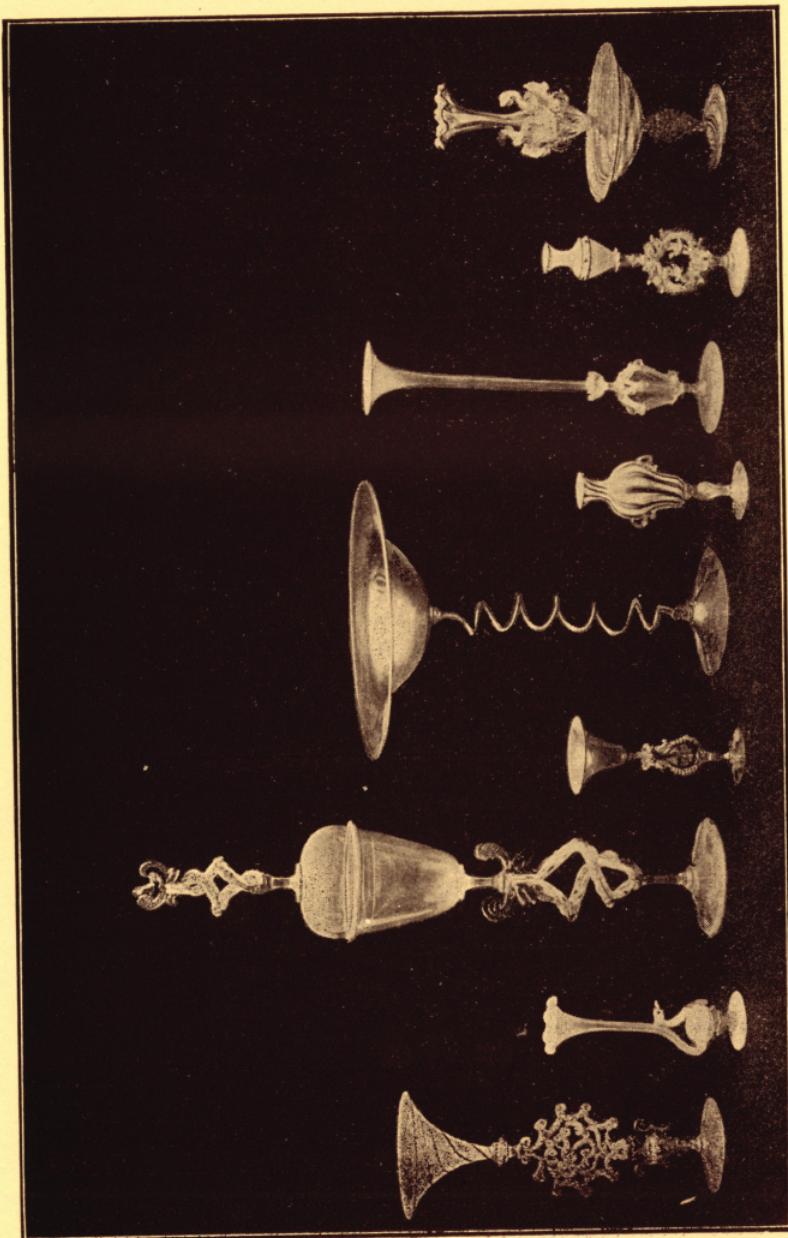
If he does not obey, his nearest relatives will be imprisoned.

If in spite of the imprisonment of his relatives he remains abroad, an emissary will be sent to kill him ».

But at that time (about 1730) appears a marvellous artist Joseph Briati who saves the art of glassmaking for a certain time. Thanks to his talent, and to his studies, he succeeds in raising a little the fallen art by the bold forms he gives to his vases and by the discovery of the secret of purity in the foreign crystals; he also succeeded in imitating the form of the Bohemian vases. He died in 1772 and with his death the art declined again.

It would be a mistake to believe that after Briati's death as during his life, blown glass had not been manufactured in Murano by other artists. On the contrary, the novelties introduced by Briati gave a start to numerous artists who distinguished themselves, such as: Bigaglia, Seguro, Mestro, Miotti and Motta.

Meanwhile, the Republic had fallen: the manufacture of blown glass languished during long years. The work was even entirely stopped. After 1815, the families of glassmakers, the Motta excepted, disappeared, after having been ruined by the steadily increasing imports of crystals from Bohemia, Styria and Carinthia, which flooded the Venetian markets. Another fact which made the struggle for life still more difficult for the Venetian glassmakers was that they knew no more how to make filigree and lacework, candelabra and chandeliers mirror frames, aventurine paste and chalcedony, enamel and gilding by hot process, so that the descendants of the illustrious Murano glassmakers were henceforth obliged to manufacture only com-



mon glasses. But in 1838 the industry was raised, thanks to Domenico Mussolin and to a master of the house of Ravanello who had been a companion of Briati. Very beautiful pieces of glass were made then, although their forms were not very satisfactory.

About the end of 1838 Domenico Mussolin sent his first works in glass to the Technological Museum of Vienna, then to the museums of Torino, Paris and St. Petersburg.

In 1842 these same works were awarded the silver medal at the Exhibition of Venice. In 1845 we find Bigaglia, knight of the Crown of Italy, engaged in the work of reviving the traditional art of Venice. At once he enlarged the use of blown glass, filigree and lacework. He was the first who made vases of **aventurine paste**: he was the first who drew it in small pipes for that purpose. Bigaglia attempted to give classical forms to white and coloured glasses, but, to say the truth, the imitation of the graceful and beautiful antique forms was not very happy because of the thickness of the material employed. The works of Bigaglia were wanting in lightness.

We may mention also Lorenzo Radi, who blew a sort of glass imitating the quartz of **chalcedony agathe**, for which he was awarded a gold medal and two silver medals at the exhibitions of Venice in 1846 and 1869.

The art of candelabra and chandeliers came into life again under the impulse of Ongaro, Toso, Fuga and Moratto; the art of crystal mirror engraving, and frame making revived, thanks to Pietro Gozzato and Angelo Fuga.

Such was in Venice in 1860 — about a century after Briati — the state of the celebrated industry of blown glass.

Lively under certain aspects, reviving under others, it languished nevertheless, in spite of the strongest of laws. However liberal were the privileges and favours granted to the glassmakers of Murano, the foreigners, possessing powerful manufacturing resources, kept the upper hand.

The works of Borselin and Davy about silica and alkaline metals improved the composition of the glass paste; on the other hand coal was used instead of wood which improved the melting and purification of the glass; the furnaces and melting apparatus were usefully modified. To the improvements of foreign manufacture the glassmakers of Murano opposed only their traditional talent in handiwork. But neither that celebrated ability nor their great experience in glass colouring (they became so proficient that they could imitate all precious stones perfectly, so that the government was obliged to inflict, on october 19th 1445, upon the forgers a fine of 1000 ducats and two years imprisonment) ; nor their universal reputation which procured them a triumphal welcome in France, in the Orient, in Portugal, in Dalmatia, in Piedmont; nor the very strong supervision of the Provost of the corporation, nor the severity of the inquisitors, nor that of the laws promulgated by the Council of Ten succeeded in saving the glass industry of Venice.

Some people reproach the government of Venice for that decay, because it failed to raise the industry to the level of other countries. But this imputation is wrong. How could we suppose, that Venice, a city of 200.000 inhabitants at the time of her greatest splendour, or the little island of Murano could ever be able to rival in the manufacturing of crystals, mirrors etc. France or Germany.

How could we forget the means of production of which these countries were possessed?

On the other hand, it is rather to be wondered at, that a small group of people succeeded in raising an industry which has never been surpassed for the beauty of certain works of blown glass by their talent alone.

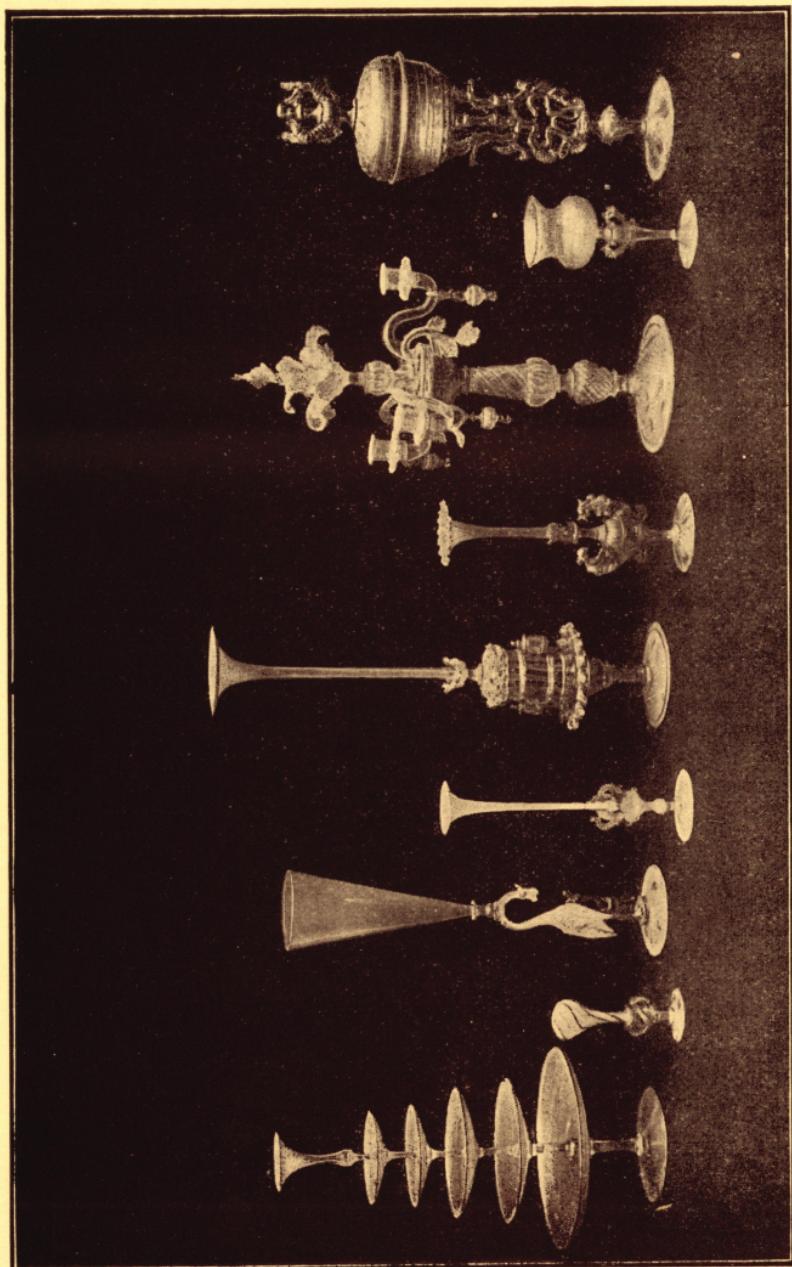
The opening of new commercial roads, the abolition of privileges and free trade, began to appear as the real source of industrial prosperity.

About 1860 Bartolomew Cecchetti wrote as follows :

« After so many precautions taken and such minute regulations, after having enjoyed prosperity during centuries, the Murano industry fell into decay, not so much by reason of the emigration of its artists or of the backward spirit of its corporation but because of the progress of the foreigners.

Therefore the laborious little island, the former centre of manufacture of admirable works of art to-day offers only souvenirs and ruins instead of the humming activity of its ancient furnaces ».

However, the elements which had allowed the marvellous productions of the past still existed; but they were divided, scattered without the necessary encouragement, support and emulation. The Venetian glassmakers kept alive in their heart the flame which gives audacity and activity, but it required to be animated and encouraged. It was possible to develop the artistical inspiration of their ancestors who during the Renaissance had wrought real miracles of glass, still admired to-day: but that inspiration required to be awakened and educated. The skill of breath and hand was not lost either, but it needed to be made more experienced, more skilful by a regular and uninterrupted pro-



duction of pieces, which then were manufactured only imperfectly and from time to time. In one word, the celebrated artistical industry of blown glass was not entirely lost among the Venetians; the elements capable of making it again alive and flourishing after centuries, still existed, transmitted from father to son. Consequently it was necessary to impress upon the artists, above all, the sentiment of form, and to put again under their eyes the classical models of antiquity, so as to incite them strongly to reproduce them: to gather in the same factory the most industrious and talented of these artists, to give them work, maintenance and an honoured name. Murano itself supplied the support which permitted the attainment of that noble aim. In 1861, thanks to the initiative of some people who were passionately fond of that beautiful art, there was established in the City Hall of Murano a collection of the most artistical glasses of classical tradition and books and documents about the art of glassmaking. In this way the most industrious glassmakers could draw their inspiration from the sources of real art and thus bring the industry to life again and to its former splendour.

In April 1862 there was opened a drawing school as a dependency of the Museum and destined to the improvement of the Murano glassmakers.

On November 20th 1864, there was opened in Murano a great glass exhibition. Count Toggenburg, presided over its opening and the magnificent works presented to him filled him with such enthusiasm, that he especially called to Venice Mr Eitelberg, manager of the Museum of Fine Arts of Vienna.

The latter, at his urgent request was authorized to expose during several months in the Museum of

Vienna a part of the works which he had seen in Murano (1865).

Thus Murano having employed all its poor means succeeded in a short time in obtaining much : in fact, the public learned and were convinced, that the skill and the ability of its artists had not changed that they were capable of doing just as well as during the most remarkable period ; consequently, that it was possible, provided that a powerful help were given, to bring to life again a splendid art and to restore to a country, too long forgotten and discouraged, its former lustre.

In fact the necessary help was sought, but without result. But the ground was prepared, and one single generous patron, one single man of genius, urged by an immense love of art would suffice to procure the help wanted.

It was necessary that the man who would dare execute the conceived plan should be possessed of uncommon intellectual, moral, and financial means : that he should be full of patience and abnegation and prepared for struggle, fatigue and sacrifice even as far as to despair of success.

That man, who had raised the art of mosaic in Murano since 1856, was not a stranger to the glass-makers. To-day the whole world knows, that Antonio Salviati, Commander of the Crown of Italy, was in the 19th century for the art of glassmaking what Briati had been in the 18th, i. e. an immortal glory.

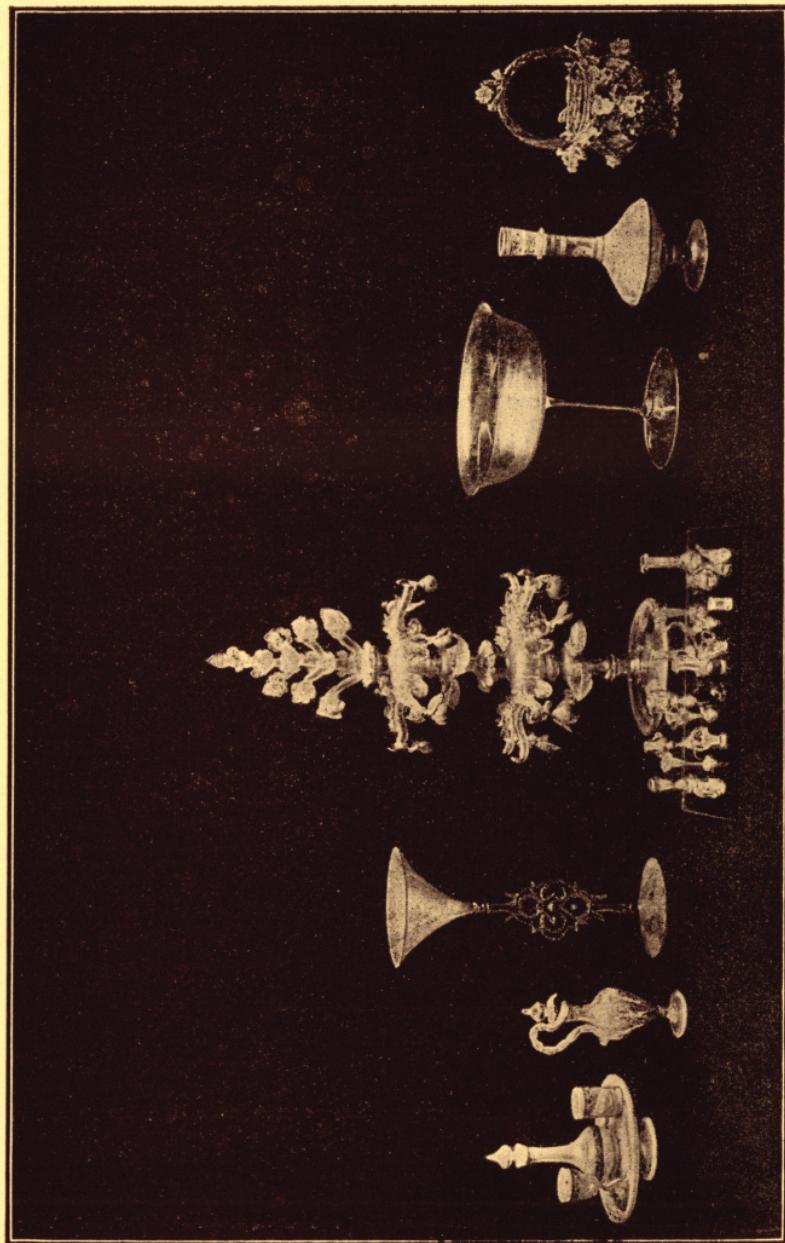
Among enormous difficulties of all sorts, after having felt his ground abroad, especially in England, after having chosen his artists with scrupulous perspicacity, Antonio Salviati established a manufactory. We see united in this unique centre the best artists of Murano : Antonio Seguso, Gio-

vanni and Antonio Berrovier, the son of the latter Giuseppe, and Giovanni Sereno. After a time these glassmakers became artists in the real meaning of the word. They restored to Murano its ancient reputation, they attained the glory of their ancestors and even surpassed it in certain points. That group of artists was destined to form a sort of model family for whom Salviati was rather a friend than a lord and master.

But whilst from the artistical point of view the enterprise gave commendable results, and promised better still, the same was not the case from the technical point of view. In the domain of blown glass there is not only white glass, which, leaving to the artist the time of working, requires only technical ability in its confection; there are also coloured glasses of different shades, opaque as well as transparent; and moreover, different coloured enamels which must be prepared. Besides, the quality indispensable to these different sorts of glasses is similarity: in fact, in the execution of the diverse models which are of infinite variety, it is necessary to dispose together the different pastes and expose them several times to the action of fire. Consequently, it is necessary to take care, that the achieved models do not run the risk of bursting.

The difficulties which the firm of Salviati met with in the first months of its foundation and the losses it had to suffer were so great that Salviati himself was going to abandon his enterprise, as he feared that he would not be able financially to support it. Thus it seemed that his great perseverance, his activity, his money, the sacrifice he made of time and talent would be lost in one moment.

But Salviati, encouraged by the artists and loving with all his heart the industry which had be-



gun to live again, decided to pursue his work. Things improved, but not sufficiently to allow Salviati to carry on single-hand and to make progress in so great a work.

However, Salviati, already well known in London, thanks to his mosaics, now became known there for the blown glass of his new factory, so that the best English periodicals praised him.

Thanks to his reputation and to Sir Henry Layard, ex-ambassador of Great Britain, who resided in Italy, Salviati found in England the capital which he could not secure in his own country. Shortly afterwards Mr. William Drake, a passionate amateur of Italian arts and industries, brought his contribution. The company having been constituted, a big building was purchased on the « Glass-maker's Shore » and in the last months of 1866 a furnace was built there. Thus helped by sufficient capital and generous patrons, the art of blown glass developed day by day, progressed and soon attained to its glorious past.

In 1867 the glasses of Venice were shown at the Universal Exhibition of Paris. It was an unexpected triumph. The enormous crowd of admirers, the praises of the French and English press, the visit of the Empress Eugenia and of Princess Clotilde, especially invited by the president of the Italian Section, His Royal Highness Prince Humbert, showed the progress which had been accomplished in that branch during the last few years.

Antonio Salviati was awarded the highest distinctions, among which was the Legion of Honour.

Not a single piece was returned to Italy: the eagerness with which the glasses of Venice — real artistical masterpieces — were bought showed how much they were appreciated.

In the same year, the capital of Prussia ordered for its Industrial Museum the reproduction of the finest models.

However, among the works exposed, were no glasses painted with gold and melted enamel, and Salviati then had the idea with Giuseppe Devero, knight of the Crown of Italy, with whom he got acquainted in Paris in 1867, to establish in Venice a school for that kind of work. And in fact, at the exhibition of Venice in 1868, at the Ducal Palace, among the dazzling productions of Salviati, the enamelled and decorated glasses were conspicuous. To prove the progress made in a few years, it will be sufficient to mention, that Salviati's glasses, in a short time, were awarded ten first prizes: Exhibitions at Paris (1867), Venice (1868), Murano (1869), Rome (1870), London (1870), Naples, Milano, Torino, Vicenza, Triest (1871).

Among the most important innovations and improvements owing to the long and indefatigable application of Salviati, we may mention:

The aventurine paste melted down and blown, a new graphite known under the name of « a fiamma glass »; frostlike glass, made in all colours (whilst before it could be made with crystal only); the trellised vases (made of broad stains of different enamels cut out oddly like marble and imprisoned in an extremely fine trellis of white enamel decorated with little bubbles); opaline glass, a paste very difficult to obtain and very refractory to combine with other colours; and the reproduction of Etruscan, Greek and Roman glasses.

This restoration of the classical industry of blown glass of Murano incited other manufacturers to try their hand at the works which Salviati's factory produced with such splendour and so great

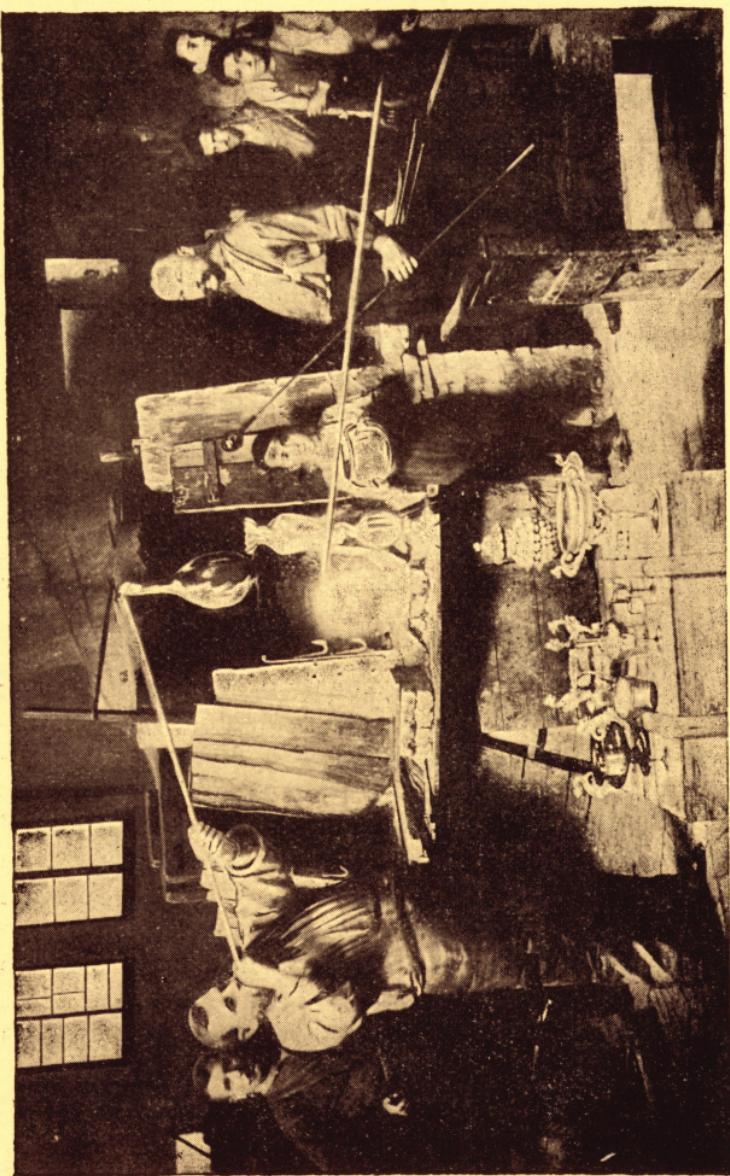
a reputation. Such were Floriano Ferro, Giovatini Nason, coming from the firm of Salviati & Emilio Moratti.

However, none of these factories attained the perfection and the variety of forms of Salviati, who at the same time had founded branches in London, Paris, New York, St. Petersburg, Frankfort, Rome, Naples, Florence, Turin and Milan.

Dr. Salviati took part, with his always magnificent products at the exhibitions of Paris in 1878, of Turin in 1880, of Milan in 1881, of Turin in 1883 and of Paris in 1889 and was awarded everywhere the finest prizes and the highest distinctions.

In January 1890, Antonio Salviati, Commander of the Crown of Italy, died, to the regret and grief of his numerous admirers, and Venice lost in him the man who all alone had succeeded in the noble and hard enterprise of restoring to the city its marvellous industry.

The establishments of Salviati kept their reputation under the management of Antonio's sons: Giulio and Silvio. Since 1896 they have been directed by the talented Maurice Camerino, commander of the Crown of Italy who, at first manager, is now sole proprietor. Thanks to his new and genial ideas, to his long years of indefatigable work, to his energy and his immense love for the noble art of glassmaking, he has given a new direction to the establishments of Salviati. He has developed to such a degree all the applications of Murano glass that he is the only one, among so many firms, who is entirely independent of the productions of Bohemia and Germany. He was enabled thus to devote himself exclusively to the production, the models, and the different kinds of blown glass, and spread more and more over all countries the Venetian art in competition with moulded glass.



On March 8th 1922, in the presence of a delegate of the government, of the Municipal authorities, of journalists and of connoisseurs of Murano glass art, Maurice Camerino opened a precious collection of ancient glass in a great hall of the firm. This collection is the result of patient researches and of a scrupulous choice to gather in fine glass cases the most original and delicate models which inspired the greatest masters of Murano glassmaking. These charming varieties of vases, cups, candelabra and chandeliers will neither be forgotten nor lost. They will still delight the eyes and minds of a great number of amateurs of all countries. In fact, a part of the 1800 models has been reproduced with great success by the very talented artists and workers of the furnaces of the Establishment Salviati, which bears the name of one of the most distinguished artists of the 20th century : Andrea Rioda.

Those marvellous glassmakers, with a simple iron pipe draw from the ardent crucibles the amorphous and incandescent glass paste ; no rule guides them in their bold creation ; their imagination and ability alone lead them and help them. Raising by a rapid movement the pipe to their mouth, they blow, and whilst the boiling paste dilates and swells, they give to it with simple pincers the most artistic and beautiful forms. In fact two tools only, handled by the skill of the Murano glassmakers, realise the marvels of that art ; the pipe (canna) and the pincers. Thanks to these two tools, the most delicious models of vases, candelabra and chandeliers which Murano created in its golden age can be recreated again.

The reproduction of vases engraved and decorated with gold or enamel have likewise given excellent results. These reproductions have been exe-

cuted in special laboratories at Murano and Venice, and the results obtained promise a complete success. The progress made at Murano in the last fifty years is really extraordinary and when we consider, that a little island like Murano, with very limited means and a small population, had the courage and patience to enter into competition with nations very rich in rough material and money which sometimes Murano ousted out of certain markets, we have some difficulty in believing it. But the proofs exist in the statistics of Murano production in the first years of its resurrection and in contemporary years.

Before 1866 the glass trade was reduced to a few dozens of hundredweights worth a few thousand lire. This is proved by a statistical table drawn up in 1873 and including the period from 1863 to 1871.

**Table of the export trade of blown glass**

	BY SEA		BY LAND		TOTAL	
	ewts.	lire	ewts.	lire	ewts.	lire
1863	72	5 000	219	15.600	291	20.800
1864	68	5.145	208	14.000	275	19.145
1865	74	6.500	221	16.000	295	22.500
1866	58	6.400	218	15.000	276	21.400
1867	71	6.900	234	16 000	305	22.900
1868	169	22.117	289	23.074	458	45.201
1869	192	31.815	289	32.423	481	64.238
1870	171	36.250	313	34.697	584	70.947
1871	479	75.225	388	43.750	867	118.975

A simple glance at the above is sufficient to realise the painful position into which that flourishing industry had fallen. Up to 1866 the average annual export trade is reduced to a quite small figure: about 300 hundredweight worth about 20000 lire.

These figures, compared to the approximate figures of export during the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries, the golden age of glass art, show a reduction of more than one fifth.

This table shows with eloquence the happy impulse given to Murano by Salviati. We may remark in fact, that in 1871, when Salviati's factory gave its highest output, the figures were more than treble those of prior production : about 867 hundred weights of blown glass exported, of a total value of 118975 lire. It is not possible, for want of well established statistics, to say exactly what was the value of blown glass exported yearly from 1919 to 1922 (i. e. from the end of the painful crisis which that industry had undergone during the great European war), but by examining the data relating to glass despatched from Venice we can infer, that the value amounted to several dozen millions. This figure does much honour to the little island of Murano, when we consider, that in 1913 i. e. one year before the great war, when the industry was flourishing, the value of glass exported did not exceed a few millions.

The difference between the figures proves eloquently the ardent activity with which the inhabitants of Murano had worked to bring their industry into life again and how they were enabled to crown by a magnificent victory their efforts and sacrifices.

These figures also show how much the artistic blown glass of Venice is now admired and appreciated abroad, how several important foreign markets, specially that of North America, have been conquered, and how the revival of this worthily prized industry is greatly due to the strenuous endeavours of Commander Camerino admirably assisted by the artists of Murano.



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# The revival of “Mosaic „,

by Dr. A. Salviati

## Definition of Mosaic and its process.

By the term « Mosaic » is meant a work formed by the use of a very large number of separate pieces, varying in size, of a hard and most durable material. Sometimes the pieces are of marble, sometimes of enamel, improperly described as glass; and the pieces being of numerous varying shades of colours, forms, and sizes, are made to produce, more or less successfully (according to the skill of the mosaicists in dressing and joining them), the same result as is obtained by the painter by means of his pencil and brush. The pieces, when placed together, are fixed on cement, and when so joined the whole forms one solid and uniform body of unquestionable durability.

## Invention of Enamels as a substitute for Marble in Mosaic.

The Ancients well knew the advantage of colour and the prominence that should be given to it in architectural decoration, and therefore having used marbles of different colours and painted substances without being able to obtain the effect they desired, they became aware of the necessity of discovering some new materials for the purpose of

mosaic in order to obtain those varieties of tints and shades which natural substances were unable to provide them with. Thence arose the use of coloured glass, first transparent, then opaque (that in enamel), as the fittest material by which to obtain the desired effect, and also for its power of resistance to atmospheric injuries. The coloured enamels are made of the same substances, sileceous, &c., as those of which glass is composed, but to these materials are added other mineral substances, which, when properly prepared and fused together, impart to the enamel its durability, density, extreme hardness and also its colour. Gold and silver enamels are the result of different operations. On a ground of thick glass is laid a leaf of gold or silver, then a film of the purest glass is spread over it, and then these three layers are subjected to the action of fire, with the result that they are fixed in one solid body, the gold being buried between the two strata of glass. It requires great knowledge and experience in the manufacture of both coloured and gold enamels.

### **Venice, the Home of Mosaic.**

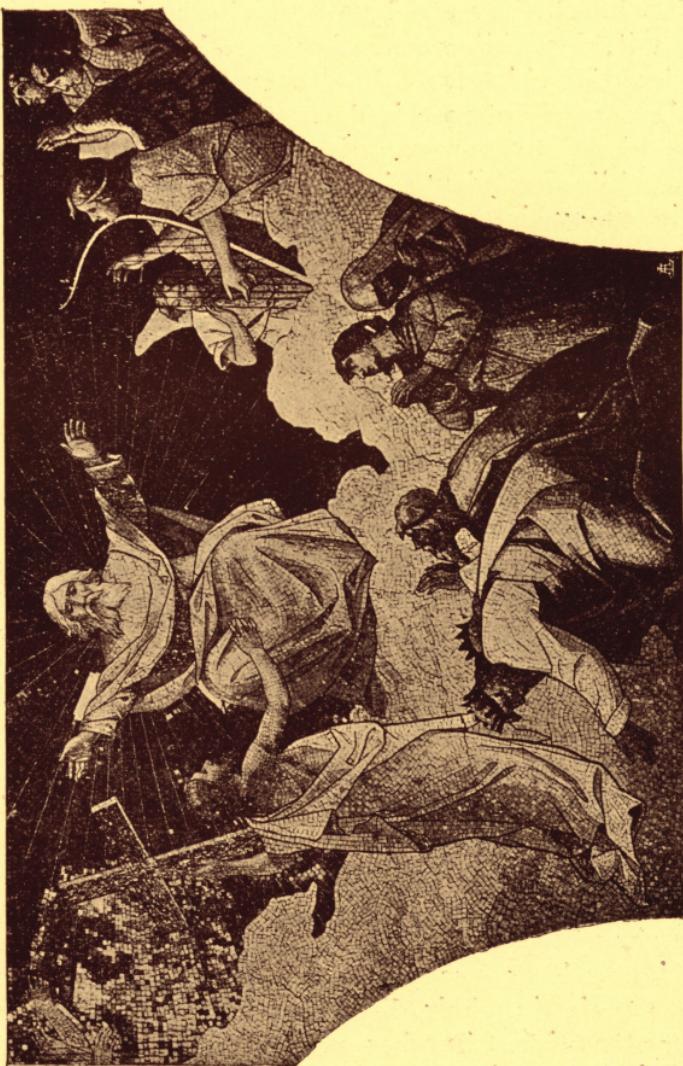
The place where mosaic, in nearly all ages, seems to have been at home is Venice. There the art, expelled from Byzantium, seems to have found a shelter and a larger field for its development. There Greek artists founded schools for the practice of the art of mosaic, and taught the Venetian people the secrets, and imparted the skill to produce works to willing scholars, who soon became greater than their masters. There was the glorious Basilica of St. Mark which during many ages was being covered with masterpieces of Mosaic decoration, and which has become a marvellous building for its

beauty, richness, and uniqueness. All who saw, all learned men who have spoken and written about this Church, have told us how charmed they were with it, for while presenting a collection of many styles of architecture, it also enshrines every possible example of mosaic decoration from the middle ages down to our own time. « St. Mark's », says Theophile Gauthier, « is a world of which we could write many times, and always insufficiently ».

### Mr. Ruskin.

Mr. Ruskin in his valuable, work « The Stones of Venice » says :

« The perception of colour is a gift just as definitely granted to one person and denied to another, as an ear for music, and the Venetians deserve especial note as the only European people who appear to have sympathised to the full with the great instinct of the Eastern races in their feeling for colour. They indeed were compelled to bring artists from Constantinople to design first the mosaic of St. Mark's but they rapidly took up and developed under more masculine conditions the system of which the Greeks had shown them the example. I believe, of all works of religious art whatsoever, the mosaic (mostly those of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries) represented in a central manner by the great ones of St. Mark's, have been the most effective. They covered the walls and the roofs of the churches with inevitable lustre. They could not be ignored or escaped from, their size rendered them majestic, their distance mysterious, their colour attractive. Churches ought to be richly adorned as being the only places in which the desire of offering a portion of all precious things to God could be legitimately expressed ».



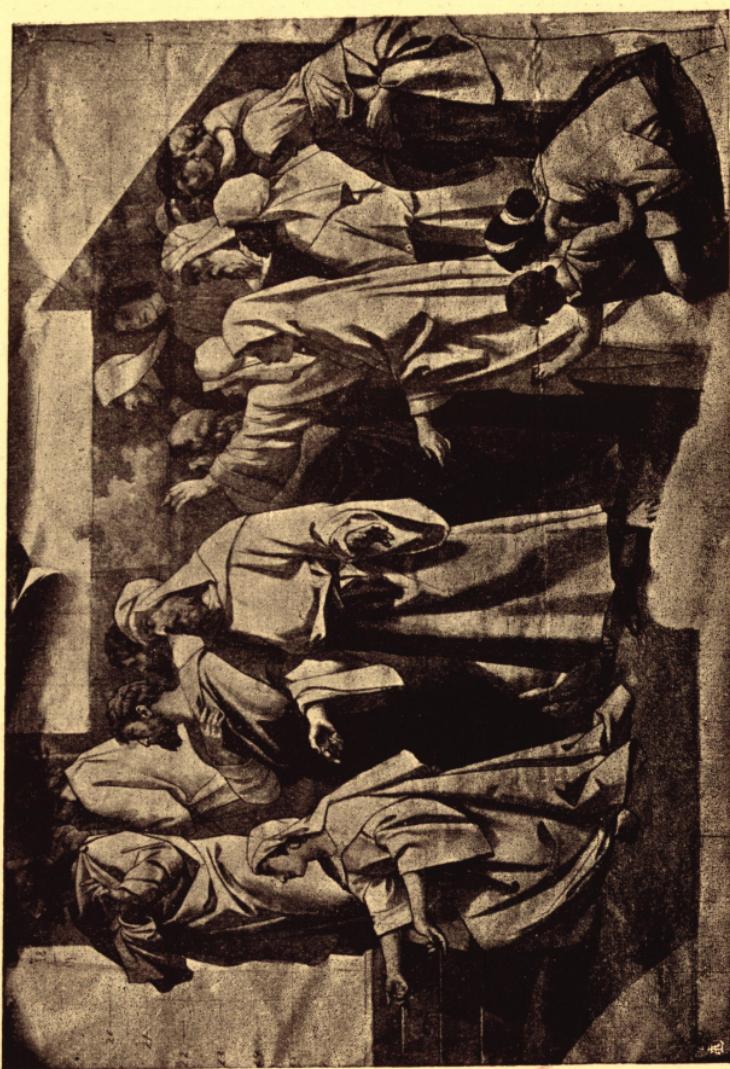
## **Mr. Street's opinion.**

Mr. Street in his work, « Brick and Marble in the Middle Ages », says :

« Over and over again, when at Venice, must one go into St. Mark's, not to criticise, but to admire, and if ever in any building in which the main object is the study of art assuredly here it must also be to worship. I think I never saw an interior so thoroughly religious and religion-inspiring as this, and it is well, therefore, not lightly to pass it by as useless for our general purpose. Its seems to show as strongly as any example can, how much awe and grandeur even a small building may attain to by the lavish expenditure of art and precious materials throughout its fabric, for it is to this that St. Mark's owes its grandeur, and to this only. There is nothing imposing either in its size, or in its architecture, on the contrary, they appear to me to be rather mean, and yet this grand display of mosaics upon a glorious gold ground makes the work appear to be both larger and better than it is ».

## **Pre-eminence of Venice in the art of Mosaic.**

All writers on the subject, however, whether Venetian or otherwise, speak of the pre-eminence of Venice in the art of mosaic, and it is well to record a sentence of Lanzi, in his « Storia Pittorica della Toscana » where, after having related the useless attempts of the Florentines to decorate worthily the chapel of St. Zenobi, says : « It seems indeed, that the glory of making mosaic has been reserved to Venice ». It is impossible to set it down as mere chance that Venice succeeded in reaching so high a degree of perfection in the mosaic art, for more pro-



bable it is that it was a privilege afforded to her by peculiar and natural circumstances, arising out of her material and artistic position, her natural inclination, her skill, and her possession of the grandest examples for study and imitation.

### **Decline of the Mosaic art in Venice and its revival by Dr. Salviati.**

But even for Venice the age of glory and prosperity was not to be perpetual. By and by the Queen of the Adriatic declined, and the sunset of her political and industrial day was also the time of decadence of the mosaic art. At last the Republic died, and the art which had taken such deep root there fell into lethargy. But it was not dead, nor even was it forgotten. The elements of its existence and of its prosperity were not so much dependent on political changes, as they were bound up with the nature and the spirit of the people. Such was the strong opinion of Dr. Salviati, who, while exercising his professional employment in the Forum of Venice, could spare his leisure hours in admiring and studying the sublime works which surrounded him, and who was at the same time grieved to note their rapid decay for want of repair and attention. Convinced as he was that his country had still the best elements for exercising and improving the art of mosaic, which was really in a state of syncope, but not lost in the instinct of his countrymen, he could not resist the temptation to endeavour to be of service to his native land, and to its almost indigenous art, by bringing about in Venice itself the revival of the mosaic art. So, abandoning his lucrative profession, he directed his exertions and his capital to the development of the ancient famous Venetian manufacture of the gold and coloured ena-

mels, by enlisting the aid of Lorenzo Radi, of Murano, an artisan who for many years had dedicated his study and experience to the manufacture of the first materials used for the mosaic, viz., the gold and coloured enamels. Their combined efforts and continual study of the means of manufacturing the gold and coloured enamels, were so successful as to deserve the highest comments from the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Venice. A committee from this Institute was selected from among the best painters and sculptors and architects for the purpose of passing their judgment on these new productions, and the following sentence was unanimously pronounced by them :

« The gold enamels for mosaic work (submitted by Dr. Salviati to our judgment) are superior to those previously manufactured, and even to some of the ancient ones, from the brilliancy and transparency of the vitreous layer (crystalline) over the gold leaf, having a compactness ad adhesiveness to the underlying layer, so as to secure the greatest possible durability, as well as on account of the lustre and continuity of the gold leaf and of the tablet presenting neither scratches nor swelling. As regards the pieces for coloured mosaics, we have found them in part even superior, through the delicacy and softness of the tints, to those of the ancient mosaics ».

### **Introduction of a new method of manufacturing Mosaic.**

At the same time, and while these materials were being brought to perfection at Murano, D.r Salviati began to create in Venice a school of mosaic, selecting the chief artists from the students

of the Venetian Academy, while the artisans were taught the principles of drawing and geometry. He next undertook journeys to distant parts, in Italy and abroad, in order to study the best examples, so that he might be in a position to instruct others and assist in their continual improvement. Thus had its origin the establishment founded in Venice and known by the title of « Salviati Venetian Enamel Mosaic ». Many and many were the obstacles which he had to overcome before he could hope to be crowned with success, but the most serious one was the cost of its manufacture, which, according to the old system, was such an elaborate and expensive proceeding as to prevent the general application of mosaic. To this he specially turned his best attention, and by the application of a most ingenious system of manufacture, he contrived to give a new impulse to the art of mosaic, so as to make it, not only a possible expensive proceeding as to prevent the general public. The old mosaics were worked on the very spot they were destined to decorate. The mosaicist having prepared the surface of the wall and covered it with a layer of cement, produced his subject by putting on the enamels piece by piece. It will be readily seen that this system of working occupies necessarily a long time, and costs a vast amount of money. It is not to be wondered at that people in modern times have been alarmed at the probable expense of producing mosaics, and to its prohibitive cost we must attribute the decay and long dormant condition of the art. The method used by Dr. Salviati is far simpler; by it he is enabled to produce mosaic work in his establishment in Venice so that it can be conveyed to any place for which it is intended, ready made, and quite prepared to be im-



mediately fixed on the cement, whether the position be circular, horizontal, or perpendicular. The subject, after being designed upon paper, is then cut into various pieces, which are distributed to different artists, each one of whom is employed in covering with mosaic such part of the general subject as his skill permits him to master. These pieces are worked upon paper on the reverse side, and when finished, they are packed in cases and sent to the place which is intended to be decorated with the mosaic. Here the subject is again put together and fixed in the cement on the spot. In this manner mosaic can be produced at such convenient cost, and so quickly, that this kind of decoration is brought within the reach of all classes of people.

By the death of Dr. Salviati, in January 1890, his great workshop did not die. It was continued first by his sons Giulio & Silvio, and then by Mr. Maurice Camerino, a hardworking man, who from 1896, manager & partner of Salviati's Establishments, and then sole proprietor, made the decorative mosaics to be known in North America, going there several times. It was at San Francisco, California, that Mr. Camerino signed important contracts for the decoration of the Stanford Memorial Church at Palo Alto. It was at the St. Louis Exhibition that he obtained the gold medal for his show of mosaics; it was in New-York that he decorated with his mosaics the Church of St. Ignatius; and a great many of his mosaic works have been executed for several towns in America.

The orders also received & executed for South America, Australia, China etc., are a great proof how this admirable art has found in Commendatore Camerino — out of Europe — an eager continuator of Dr. Salviati's grand work.

Awards and Honours obtained

by the firm

Dr. A. SALVIATI

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GRAND MEDAL OF HONOUR and the *Cross of the Italian Order Sts. Maurice & Lazarus* at the International Exhibition, LONDON.

GOLD-MEDAL, and *Cross of the French Légion d'Honneur; Cross of the Italian Order of the Crown of Italy* at the International Exhibiton, PARIS.

GOLD-MEDAL, and *Cross of the Commander of the Crown of Italy* at the International Maritime Exhibition, NAPLES.

DIPLOMA OF HONOUR and *Cross of the Austrian Order of Francis-Joseph* at the International Exhibition, VIENNA.

*Second Class of the Prussian Order of the Crown* for important mosaic-works executed in Erfurt, Cologne, Marienburg, Aix-la-Chapelle and BERLIN.

GOLD-MEDAL & DIPLOMA OF HONOUR, International Exhibition, PARIS.

GOLD-MEDAL at the Exhibition of TURIN.

DIPLOMA OF HONOUR at the Exhibition of MILAN.

DIPLOMA OF HONOUR at the Universal Exhibition, BOSTON.

TWO DIPLOMAS OF HONOUR and the *Cross of the Order of the Dutch Lion* at the International Exhibition, AMSTERDAM.

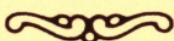
TWO GOLD-MEDALS and the *Cross of The Knights of the Order of Isabella, the Catholic*, at the Universal Exhibition, BARCELONA.

DIPLOMA OF HONOUR, TWO GOLD-MEDALS and the *Cross of the Officers of the Légion d'Honneur* at the International Exhibition, PARIS.

GOLD-MEDAL at the International Exhibition, BRUXELLES.

GOLD - MEDAL at the International Exhibition, ST. LOUIS U. S. A.

*N. B.* — Minor Awards, obtained at less important and local Exhibitions not included in the above list.



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R. Officine di Arti Grafiche

Soc. An. LONGO & ZOPPELLI

\* \* TREVISO \* \*